



Kimberly A. Foster
Executive Director

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

COMMISSIONERS:

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SANDRA RUDNICK
STACEY SAVELLE
ADELINA SORKIN, LCSW/ACSW, CHAIR
DR. HARRIETTE F. WILLIAMS
TRULA J. WORTHY-CLAYTON

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **November 17, 2008**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Tina Pedersen
Ann Franzen	Sandra Rudnick
Susan Friedman	Stacey Savelle
Helen Kleinberg	Adelina Sorkin
Dr. La-Doris McClaney	Martha Trevino Powell
Steven M. Olivas, Esq.	Trula J. Worthy-Clayton

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Patricia Curry	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Rev. Cecil Murray	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Sorkin, Chair.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda for the November 17, 2008 General Meeting was unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 20, 2008 – The Minutes were unanimously approved after a proper motion.
- November 3, 2008 – The Minutes were unanimously approved after a proper motion.

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

- **Announcement:** Chair Sorkin announced the passing earlier this month of Hal Brown, one of the founding Commissioners of the Commission for Children and Families. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) will adjourn in his honor tomorrow.
- **Acknowledgement:** Chair Sorkin acknowledged Katie Bowser, County Counsel, for her work with the Commission and presented her with a beautiful plant as a token of appreciation. Katie is being reassigned in County Counsel and the Commission's new Counsel is Aleen Langton.
- **Annual Report Approval:** Chair Sorkin indicated that the Commission received the first draft of the Annual Report on October 6, 2008. However, some changes had been made as suggested by the Commissioners, along with changes discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on November 11, 2008. The recommendations section to the Board of Supervisors still needs work since the original recommendations listed in the first draft included items that had not yet been presented to the Commission during the reporting period of this Annual Report.

The Commission discussed the following general changes: 1) There are two references to an Ad Hoc Committee, Reorganization and Restructure. A correction needs to be made with respect to the name of the committee and Commissioner Curry's input received; 2) The last page listing the Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors states that "this page needs work". It was requested that the Commission discuss each of the recommendations separately. Input was received and will be incorporated in the recommendations. In addition, it was suggested that the date for the completion of the survey analysis be listed as 2008/2009 to allow the Committee sufficient time to finalize.

Following the discussion on additional changes and clarification of Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, the Commission agreed that after the changes are made, the Annual Report should come back to the Commission for approval.

Follow-Up

Commissioners Savelle, Kleinberg, and Worthy-Clayton recommended rewording the recommendations in a manner that they are stated as recommendations directed to the Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Curry's input will be included in the Ad Hoc section. Corrections provided will also be included in the document.

The Commission agreed to provide all input on the Annual Report to the Chair by November 26, 2008. The Annual Report will come before the Commission again at the December 1, 2008 General Commission meeting.

- **Cancellation of December 15, 2008 Regular Commission Meeting and Scheduling of December 15, 2008 Special Commission Meeting:** The cancellation of the December 15, 2008 Regular Commission Meeting was unanimously approved after a proper motion. The Commission also approved December 15, 2008 as a Special Meeting to be held

at the Chicana Service Action Center, on First and Ditman in East Los Angeles. The Commission's holiday luncheon will be held after the Commission meeting.

VI. COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

- **Childhood Obesity:** Commissioner Pedersen thanked the committee members and the many community and public representatives who have attended the committee meetings. She then reported on the work and activities of the committee. Commissioner Pedersen also provided the Commission with statistical data regarding obesity in children and young adults and emphasized the need for weight management and obesity prevention.

Commissioner Pedersen presented for discussion and approval a draft letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding strategies for DCFS and Probation to address Childhood Obesity. The draft letter recommended for approval by the Commission has not been reviewed by the committee but does capture areas that have been discussed by the committee members.

Suggestions from the Commission included:

- 1) Add Corrections and Standards Authority (CSA) minimum standards for sufficient and nutritional food and physical activity;
- 2) Add a statement to the effect that psychotropic medication needs to be monitored as it is frequently a cause of obesity;
- 3) Add Mental Health Department as an attendee of the meetings;
- 4) Include information provided by DCFS regarding their efforts to include the Commission's recommendations to the Body Mass Index (BMI) Protocols.
- 5) Include the appropriate Deputy Chief Executive Officers (DCEOs) and Department Heads in the distribution.

Follow-Up

It was agreed to bring the letter back to the Commission for approval at the December 1, 2008 Commission meeting with the recommended changes.

- **Executive Committee:** In the absence of Commissioner Curry, Commissioner Kleinberg gave the Executive Committee Report. The Executive Committee met on November 11, 2008 to discuss several issues including: 1) Annual Report – Recommendations for changes to focus on continuum of care, community partnerships, outcomes for children, and feedback/evaluations from clients. 2) Auditor-Controller's Report – Discussion regarding the restructuring of the Commission to report to the Chief Executive Office (CEO). The Committee will draft a letter to the BOS stating the Commission's desire to remain under the BOS Executive Office. 3) Miguel Santana's Communication – Executive Committee Chair Sorkin will draft a letter acknowledging receipt of Miguel's letter. It was further discussed to invite the CEO, Bill Fujioka to the Commission's January 5, 2009 meeting. Miguel Santana has already agreed to attend the February 2, 2009 meeting as his first quarterly meeting with the Commission. 4) Commission's Five Focus Areas – It was the consensus of the Executive Committee that the Commission should not be limited to five areas but should be guided by ensuring a continuum of care, holistic approach, outcomes, and evaluation. 5) Commission Office Functioning – the Executive Committee does not agree with the recommended changes in the Commission office operation recommended by the Executive Director due to

budget/staffing cuts regarding frequency of Commission/Committee meetings, and electronic distribution of meeting materials. The Executive Director, Commission Secretary, DCFS and the Commission Chair will meet on November 19, 2008 to discuss the Commission budget.

6) Commission Mission – The Executive Committee will review the Commission’s mission at its next meeting. The mission will include the full scope of the Commission’s work.

Commissioner Olivas reiterated that Miguel Santana was very clear in asking the Commission to see its work in terms of solutions and not principles. He emphasized that the Commission should approach Miguel with action items and stated that five areas are ambitious; he suggested focusing on two areas, and show progress, recommendations and solutions. Commissioners Rudnick, Worthy-Clayton, Powell, and Friedman agreed on the importance of being focused and presenting solutions.

Follow-Up

Miguel Santana will attend the February 2, 2009 Commission meeting. As a courtesy, the invitation of other DCEOs, Sheila Shima and Doyle Campbell, to this Commission meeting will be reconsidered. In addition, as a courtesy, Miguel Santana will be notified of the invitation to the other DCEOs.

The Executive Committee will meet with the Executive Director and Commission Secretary in December 2008 to discuss the Commission office operation.

The Executive Committee will review the Commission’s Mission to include the full scope of the Commission’s work.

- **Education Coordinating Council (ECC):** Commissioner Trevino Powell reported on the ECC meeting held on October 31, 2008. The ECC is a collaborative body created to ensure that Probation and DCFS children receive the proper education. The main topic of discussion at the meeting was the future of the ECC, which is scheduled to sunset June 30, 2009. Currently, ECC is a quasi-independent council functioning under the fiscal umbrella of The Children’s Council of Los Angeles County (formerly The Children’s Planning Council) and has no permanent funding source, no financial or consultant commitments beyond June 2009.

The alternatives considered were:

- 1) Sun setting the ECC
- 2) Continuing as quasi-independent
- 3) Becoming a project of another organization
- 4) Becoming a project of the CEO

The two most viable options are:

- 1) Continuing as a quasi-independent organization under the fiscal umbrella of The Children’s Council Foundation, Inc. (the foundation’s new name), with funding from county departments and the Board of Supervisors to be determined each year, contingent upon available funds;

- 2) Becoming a project of the Chief Executive Office, through which the county would hire an executive director/point person for the ECC and fund a small consultant team to work with that person to achieve the ECC's goals.

The ECC voted to adopt Option Two – Becoming a project of the CEO. Updates will be provided at their next meeting.

VII. PRESENTATION/QUESTION AND ANSWER – BROWN ACT

Barbara Goul and Katie Bowser, from County Counsel, gave an overview of the Brown Act regulations that govern the Commission meetings. Ms. Goul provided the Commission with an overview of the Brown Act indicating that the Brown Act is the State's Open Meeting Law.

The Commission was also informed that it applies to the Board of Supervisors, City Councils, School Districts, Commissions that the Board creates and any Committees that the Commission creates including all Standing Committees. Standing Committees are those that have either a set meeting schedule or a continuing subject matter jurisdiction, regardless of how many are on the Committee. However, the Brown Act does not apply to Ad Hoc Committees solely comprised of less than a quorum that meet for a temporary timeframe and a very limited purpose.

Requirements for the Brown Act were identified as:

- Regular meetings must be posted 72 hrs. in advance (includes weekends)
- Special meetings require 24 hrs. posting in advance
- Description of Agenda Items must be sufficient to give the public a reasonable idea of what will be discussed so they can determine whether or not they want to attend the meeting.
- Anything not listed on the Agenda cannot be discussed.
- Adding an Agenda Item after the 72 hrs. posting period can only be done in an emergency situation that has: 1) just come to the attention of the Commission (not due to their fault), 2) it requires urgent action, and 3) Agreement of 2/3 of the Commission.
- Deleting an Agenda Item can be done at any time.
- Public Comment entry is required on each Agenda.
- Public availability of Agenda materials- The public is entitled to all Agenda material, including draft material, when available to the Commissioners, except confidential material.

The definition of a Brown Act meeting was described as:

- A meeting is a gathering of a quorum (50% plus one), no matter how informal, where public business is transacted or discussed.
- There are three types of meetings: 1) Regular, 2) Special, and 3) Emergency.
- Action is taken by collective commitment or promise by majority to make a positive or negative decision.
- Use of e-mails cannot be sent to a quorum of either a Committee or the Commission, including cc's or forwarding. Only information or scheduling of meetings, no dialogue or discussion can take place.
- Continuing a meeting to another date to discuss the items listed on the Agenda can be done if you: 1) adjourn and continue within five days, 2) no new agenda required, 3) post notice of continuance.

- Teleconferencing Requirements – The majority of Commissioners must be in Los Angeles County; all off-site locations must be listed on the Agenda. The Agenda must be posted at each site, all sites must be ADA compliant, and all sites must be open and accessible to the public. A vote is allowed, by roll call only. Generally, meetings must be held in Los Angeles County, but there are exceptions.

The Commission was provided information for conducting meetings that included:

- Cannot be held outside the agency's jurisdiction
- Cannot be held in a place that discriminates or that requires a payment/purchase
- Must be ADA compliant
- Cannot require a person to register/provide information as a condition to attend
- Cannot prohibit the use of tape recorders, cameras, or broadcasting unless they are disrupting the meeting. No notice of intent to tape or video tape is required.
- Any tape/film record made by the Commission must be made available to the public. Fees may be charged for copies, but not to listen or view.
- Public Comment is required by the Brown Act: 1) after each agenda item is discussed but before action is taken, or 2) at the end of the meeting under Public Comment on an item within the Commission's subject matter jurisdiction. Time limits for speakers may be set for speakers, as long as equal time is given. It is recommended to have a set policy in place. All speakers must fill out the speaker form, but the Commission has the discretion to require separate forms for each item or to include all items for each speaker on one form. Discussion of personal case information is allowed under Public Comment, if it is within the body's subject matter jurisdiction.

The Commission was informed that the threshold question to meet in Closed Session is: Does the Commission have jurisdiction over a subject matter such as: litigation, personnel matters, security threat, labor negotiations, etc. It was indicated by County Counsel, Katie Bowser, that the Commission does not address issues requiring a closed session.

The Consequences for Violating the Brown Act are as follows:

- Civil action to stop or prevent violations
- Civil action to declare null and void
- Court costs/reasonable attorney's fees, if a Brown Act violation is found
- Misdemeanor for knowing violations (wrongful intent)

Barbara Goul also distributed handouts on Roberts Rules of Order, which the Board of Supervisors recommends that the Commission follow, although it is within the Commission's discretion as to the extent of complying with the Robert's Rules of Order.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Sorkin announced the Children's Council will present their Score Card on Wednesday, November 19, 2008, 9:00-11:00 a.m., on the eighth floor patio.

IX. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned by Chair Sorkin.